



FaithSearch Ministry Report:
Moscow & St. Petersburg, Russia
January-February 2009 Trip Report

I was absent from the office for twenty-two days in which **I presented *FaithSearch* Discovery a total of twenty-four times in two major cities of Russia.** Six of those events were held at Christian schools and churches. All others were at State Teachers' Continuing Education Centers, public high schools and universities, Educators' Conferences, etc. All in all, **over three-hundred-fifty high school humanities teachers, including pedagogy students, received the training and materials to teach the *FaithSearch* Discovery curriculum in their classrooms. Two hundred more Bible College/Seminary students were also trained in and equipped with our materials.** The ages and sophistication levels of the audiences varied widely—from a fifth-grade prodigy in the Orthodox Church Gimnazia (grade school) to the silver-haired Chair of the History Department in the Russian Academy of Science. If the numbers could speak, they would in fact be singing hymns of glory to God who made it all possible!

This was the first trip that was almost completely planned out by the Russian Academy of Pedagogy—I **just needed to show up in those places, set up my laptop and projector and start “preaching the Gospel with evidence.”** Easy.



In fact, learning to trust the business and communication style of these academics was perhaps the most stressful part of the trip. They didn't tell me the dates and locations ahead of time, simply because they do not normally plan far ahead for themselves. Instead, I made numerous phone calls, adjustments and confirmations as the time for each presentation approached. Miraculously, all of the events actually did happen and my days, including some of the weekends, were indeed packed.



In these three weeks, the Academy of Pedagogy wanted me to try out the material on, and discuss it with, as many different audiences as possible—historians, psychologists, current and future teachers, school kids, sociologists, artists, journalists and theologians (Baptists, Adventists, and Orthodox)—before they approve it for high schools all over the Russian Federation. Each of those institutions was required to send a formal, rubber-stamped reference letter providing their reaction and feedback on what they heard and saw. Having seen copies of some of those documents, I can report that the testing went really well. One of them reads, **“This is definitely a breakthrough material and method in the whole area of equipping the teachers with what they absolutely need to know today—a reasonable, clear and sound presentation of the case for Christianity. We all talk a lot about it. Now, somebody is actually doing it!”**

The Academy liked the balanced and non-denominational approach of our ministry so much that just before leaving Moscow, **I was asked to write a ninety-page Teachers' Manual on the essence of Evangelical Christianity**—the most important things each school teacher in Russia has to know about it. I think I know very well how to say it, using the two dozen words of John 3:16. May God help me not to dilute it too much in the other eighty-nine pages!

The content of the *FaithSearch* material and the presentation did not, of course, satisfy everybody every time. Each presentation was followed by a sometimes long and vigorous discussion, each of which was recorded and later analyzed by the Academy of Education specialists. Most of their recommendations were very much to the point and extremely useful. Because of (wonder



of wonders!) digital technology, I was able to implement their ideas immediately and test them in the very next day's setting. Those changes and adjustments were introduced into the PowerPoint® presentation, tested and approved or rejected in real time. **This showed, first, how solid the basic idea behind the Discovery presentation is, while at the same time demonstrating how the material can be effectively used and adapted in different settings.**



For me personally, one of the responses which stood out was made by an Orthodox Priest in charge of the theological track in a private grade school: **“I teach on the same topic, I follow exactly the same logic, I use the very same material. Except, yours is better.”**

Below follows more of the valuable and gratifying feedback I collected on this trip:

- This is absolutely new for us! Lots of things to review and to think over and over again. Do you expect us to respond to these truths now or can we let you know later? (Arts College Student)
- The material itself is great but are you sure you picked the right audience today? I suspect they [students] will have to struggle through some of this “rational” stuff but I am also sure that most of them will enjoy the process. (Arts College Instructor)
- Although most of this material is familiar, something suddenly clicks in your head and everything falls in its places! Somebody had to have said these words in exactly the way you did!... The presentation is very carefully crafted and methodically structured, captures and holds the audience's attention, avoids unnecessary arguments, and touches the participants' minds and hearts. Thank you for all the labor you put into creating this very effective and powerful material. (History Department, Russian Academy of Science)
- Our students are of course familiar with most of the material. Now, they also have a clear understanding why we have been teaching it to them. (Adventist Bible College President)
- Will you please come to the city of Nizhny Novgorod [an overnight train South of Moscow]? We would like to make a TV broadcast of the presentation on the city station from the main city auditorium. It seats about a thousand people and I don't see why we couldn't pack it for a presentation like this. (Adventist Bible College Student)
- Thanks. It was SO different from what we usually have in class! Wish all our classes were so interesting and so clear. Will you come again and teach Algebra or History? (High School Student)
- Your material fit perfectly in the topics and issues we were just discussing with kids. We are looking forward to hearing their responses now, after you put all this material into their hands. (High School Teacher)
- It is extremely important to equip the students with the knowledge [evidence for faith] in this age when their character is being built and they begin to formulate their personal convictions and spiritual truths. We are so happy that our students had a chance to hear it today. Thanks for providing us with the material [Discovery CDs]. We are going to be using it A LOT! (Pentecostal High School Teacher)
- Now I know what to answer to a colleague of mine when she starts bugging me again with her Yoga stuff: Just give me one historical evidence for Yoga! (Baptist Church Member)

My next trip in April will continue on the same track—equipping as many school teachers with the *FaithSearch* Discovery materials and training as possible—for the 2009-2010 school year. **This time, I will also be introducing it to the Ukrainian educational systems in the Cherkassy, Rovno and Kiev regions.**



Trip Statistical Summary:

Date	Location	Event	Description	Attendance
01.28.09	St.Aleksandr Nevskiy Orthodox Gimnazia	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	20 teachers
01.28.09	“Slovo” (international missions agency)	“Unwrapping the Russian Soul for the Mystery of Christ’s Love”	Training	15 general public (missionaries)
01.29.09	Primorskiy District Teachers Continuing Education Center	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	30 teachers
01.30.09	St. Petersburg Teachers Continuing Education Center	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	30 teachers
02.01.09	St. Petersburg Baptist Church	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Outreach	60 general public
02.02.09	St.Aleksandr Nevskiy Orthodox Gimnazia	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Outreach	40 students
02.02.09	Orthodox Private School Teachers Conference	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	30 teachers
02.03.09	St. Petersburg State Pedagogical University	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	25 students, 5 teachers
02.03.09	St. Petersburg Radio Maria	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Promo	Hundreds of radio and podcast listeners
02.04.09	Butovo Pentacostal Grade School	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Outreach/training	15 students, 15 teachers
02.05.09	Euro-Asian Pentecostal Seminary	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	40 students, 5 teachers
02.06.09	Zaokskaya Adventist Seminary	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	140 students, 10 teachers
02.09.09	Moscow Teachers’ Continuing Education Academy	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	25 teachers
02.10.09	Academic Arts College	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	20 students
02.11.09	Russian Sociology University	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	25 teachers (in progress)
02.12.09	Sergiev Posad District Teachers Conference	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	40 teachers
02.12.09	Sergiev Posad Orthodox Gimnazia	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	20 teachers
02.13.09	Moscow State Pedagogical University	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	30 teachers (in progress)
02.13.09	Russian Academy of Science	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	10 teachers
02.14.09	“Friendship” International University	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	20 students
02.16.09	Moscow State Pedagogical University (MGZPI)	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	30 teachers (in progress)
02.17.09	Moscow Baptist Seminary	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	50 students, 10 teachers
02.17.09	St.Filaret Orthodox Graduate Institute	<i>FaithSearch</i> Discovery	Training	20 teachers
TOTALS			Outreach (3 events):	115 Outreach Total
			Training (20 events):	350 students 355 teachers 705 Training Total
			Promo (1 events):	Unknown
	Total event attendance:		24 events	820 Total Attendance